

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Allocation of Tribal Gaming Funds to Tribal Colleges Scholarship Program [LFB Paper #706]

Motion:

Move to repeal the Department of Veterans Affairs' tribal college tuition reimbursement program and delete base funding for the program of \$405,000 PR (tribal gaming revenue) annually.

Create an appropriation under the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) for payments to tribal colleges and provide \$405,000 tribal gaming revenue annually beginning in fiscal year 2015-16 for that purpose. Specify that HEAB should make a payment to each tribal college in this state that is equal to the product of: (a) the amount per student the tribal college has received or expects to receive from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) in the federal Department of the Interior based on the number of Native American students who were enrolled in the previous academic year; and (b) the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) Wisconsin resident students who were enrolled in the college in the previous academic year for whom the college will not receive BIE funds. Specify that, if the amount provided in the appropriation were insufficient to make the payments, that those payments would be prorated and that payments would be made no later than December 31 of each year.

In addition, specify that the governing body of each tribal college would be required to submit the following information to HEAB annually by October 15 if that tribal college wishes to receive a payment from HEAB: (1) the number of FTE students enrolled at the tribal college in the previous year; (2) the Indian student count for the previous academic year; and (c) the per student funding amount that the tribal college has received or expects to receive from the Bureau of Indian Education in the federal Department of the Interior based on the tribal college's reported Indian student count for the previous academic year.

Note:

DVA's tribal college tuition reimbursement program provides tuition assistance to veterans who attend either the College of the Menomonee Nation (CMN) or the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCO). No payments have been made to students since the time that the program was created under 2013 Wisconsin Act 20 (the 2013-15 biennial budget act). Financial aid officials at the colleges indicate the students who are veterans generally have their tuition paid for with federal veterans assistance programs or other programs.

Posted By:
Wheeler Reports, Inc.

Based on information provided by the colleges, LCO enrolled 333.9 FTE students in 2014-15 of whom 265 FTE were eligible for BIE support and CMN enrolled 384.8 FTE students of whom 240.25 FTE students were eligible for BIE support. These enrollment figures exclude continuing education units that are used by the BIE in calculating student support payments. According LCO staff, BIE provided \$6,355 to tribal colleges in 2014-15 for each FTE Native American student who was enrolled in the previous year. Based on this data, it is estimated that HEAB would make payments of \$274,200 to CMN and \$130,800 to LCO in 2015-16 under this proposal. This would provide prorated funding of approximately \$1,900 per FTE student not eligible for BIE support to CMN and LCO.